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INTERIM REPORT
of the
SUPPORT SERVICES COMMITTEE

October, 1976

THE
**SOCIAL
PLANNING**
and RESEARCH COUNCIL
of Hamilton and District

SUPPORT SERVICES COMMITTEE

Mrs. Carole Capling, Chairperson

Mrs. Barbara Cambridge

Miss Joyce Caygill

Mr. Steve Dwyer

Miss Mary E. Gibbon

Mr. Art Grady

+ Ms. Jackie Howard

Mrs. Hetty Mogford

* Mrs. Wilma Southall

Miss Norma Walsh

Mrs. Lois Walton

Staff: Mark Goldenberg, M.S.W.,
Planning Associate.

+ Appointed during the year

* Resigned during the year



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BACKGROUND

In preparation for a meeting of representatives of a wide range of social and health-associated agencies in the spring of 1975, the Social Planning and Research Council sent a questionnaire to the directors or executives of each of the agencies asking them to identify problem areas which they felt most severely affected the people their agency dealt with. One of the three main problem areas identified by the majority of people was the need for support services for elderly and disabled people to enable them to live in their own homes.

At the meeting, which took place at Chedoke Hospitals on March 17th, 1975, and which was attended by about 45 agency representatives, the Council undertook to follow up this particular problem and to study the situation further.

A meeting of a small group of people took place on March 23rd, 1975, at which some of the needs were identified; at the same time, it was recognized that there was a wide range of existing services in Hamilton intended to meet some of these needs. There is, however, little available data to back up the assumption that these needs affect a significant number of people, and it is difficult to know the extent to which various services are able to meet the needs.

A larger meeting, of about 15 people who had attended the original meeting at Chedoke, was held on July 9th, 1975. It was pointed out at this meeting that the Hamilton-Wentworth District Health Council was involved in investigating the need in the area of health services and it was therefore agreed that there was little purpose in the S.P.R.C.

also working in that area. In view of this, it was decided that a committee be formed to recommend a course of action regarding what might be referred to as "social" support services, e.g., services in the areas of accommodation, information and counselling, chore services, friendly visiting services, etc. A number of those attending agreed to sit on this committee, which held its first meeting on September 10th, 1975.

THE COMMITTEE

It was decided that the services to be looked at should be those that operate to enable people to live in the "least institutional" setting in which they are capable of functioning, and that the users would be people of any age who are in a "situation of some dependency".

Early in 1976, the committee, having discussed the matter over a number of meetings, adopted the following terms of reference:

"With reference to members of the community who, because of health problems, require support services, the committee will:

1. Identify support services available.
2. Identify gaps and short-comings in the system.
3. Take appropriate actions to alleviate the gaps and short-comings identified in No. 2."

In its first look at priorities in the area of support services, the committee identified the following as major needs:

- Short-Term Care, available at any time during the day, seven days a week. Attendant services are required for those who wish to stay at home but are incapable of meeting all their needs. These should be available for people who are ill, incapacitated, or just discharged from the hospital, and to give relief to family members caring for the disabled or chronically ill in their own homes.
- Chore Services, which should include housework and, in particular, heavy cleaning, home maintenance and repair services.
- Look-In and Visiting Services, to check on the well-being of, and provide friendly contacts for, socially isolated elderly.

A survey done by V.O.N. nurses, who were asked to check on the needs of patients, identified those which were required by the larger number of the patients reported upon. These were: heavy cleaning, shopping, personal care, laundry, and friendly visiting. A summary of the needs identified in the V.O.N. survey is appended to this report.

EXISTING AND DEVELOPING SERVICES

It was recognized that a number of services are available to meet the needs which had been identified, and a start was made in listing community programs available in these areas and determining how this information could be disseminated in the community, to people in the health field as well as to potential users themselves.

On October 1st, 1975, an extension of the Home Care Program was established as a pilot project by the provincial government in three communities, of which Hamilton-Wentworth is one. Home Care services can now be provided to delay or prevent transfer of selected patients to an institution, in addition to the previously-established short-term active treatment program. In addition to the professional services provided, homemaking service may be allowed where necessary beyond the previous limit. Among other changes, the expanded Home Care Program was given the mandate to examine home helps such as repairs, chores, heavier work, and other services not provided by visiting homemakers. The committee felt that this would enable existing organizations providing support services to expand their programs since they would have a guaranteed customer in Home Care. It was also felt that Canada Manpower and the Provincial Vocational Rehabilitation Services might provide funds for training full-time personnel to man these expanding services.

During the course of the summer of 1976, a student working at the Central Information Service gathered information about services available in the community to help meet those needs of the elderly which had been identified by the V.O.N. study. The services include such things as heavy cleaning, yard maintenance, shopping, laundry, and friendly visiting. The resources suggested to meet these needs include those provided by community organizations as well as by commercial operations. Two hundred and fifty copies of a booklet listing these services are being printed and will be made available to agencies and to those working with the people who have the need.

Arising partly out of discussions about gaps in service at meetings of the Committee, submissions for L.I.P. grants for two projects were made by the Regional Municipality of Hamilton-Wentworth:

1. Helping Hands of Hamilton-Wentworth, a program similar to one now being operated in Halton County, through which heavy cleaning, yard work, etc., would be done for elderly or handicapped people who are unable to do this work for themselves.
2. Attendant/Companion Service, for situations where Visiting Home-maker services are not appropriate. This program would not only provide a service badly needed in the community, but would also provide an opportunity for people with limited skills to get into the labour force. Members of the committee have agreed to act, if invited, on an Advisory Committee to this program.

The Social Planning and Research Council, on the recommendation of the committee, has offered its support for the submissions for these projects, in that it is felt that they would fill a gap in services available in Hamilton-Wentworth and would help make it possible for people who require some assistance to continue to live in the community.

LIAISON AND COORDINATING ACTIVITIES

During the course of its meetings, members of the committee had occasion to learn about programs or developments in each other's agencies to the mutual benefit of all concerned. In addition, because it was noted that the Assessment and Placement Service and the Central Information Service

were providing similar information services and were receiving similar types of inquiries, the committee facilitated their getting together to consolidate and sort out the type of service and information that was available.

Early in 1976, representatives of the committee met with the Admissions and Discharge Committee of Hamilton Civic Hospitals to present an overview of existing support services. Because of budget restraints on hospital expenditures, hospitals are under pressure to minimize the length of hospitalization, and many patients in the future will face hospital discharge earlier than in the past. The doctors are concerned about this and appear interested in finding out about existing support services for patients who, from a medical standpoint, no longer require hospitalization. These services might also enable some people in nursing homes to be cared for in their own homes, thus releasing beds for people being discharged from hospital who require nursing home care. At the same time, the Central Information Service received a request from the administrator of Henderson General Hospital for a listing of available support services for distribution to members of the medical profession.

At this time, too, the committee advised the Hamilton-Wentworth District Health Council of its concern about the need for additional support services to enable elderly, disabled, or chronically ill people to live in their own homes. The committee's terms of references and the areas on which it would be focussing were outlined and our letter emphasized that the committee was thinking in terms of social support services and not of medical services. Liaison with the Health Council is maintained through members of the committee.

Liaison has also been maintained with the Domiciliary Committee, a joint committee of the Regional Social Services Department and the Hamilton-Wentworth District Health Council, which is looking at the type of needs which could be filled through the Region. This committee is looking at total needs, both medical and social, whereas the S.P.R.C. Support Services Committee is concerned only with social support services.

NEXT STEPS

In the course of the committee's discussions, a number of problems have been noted as requiring further consideration. The committee expects to be giving priority during the coming months to the following areas:

1. The need to establish or expand programs to make available short-term care, chore services, visiting and look-in services, and respite for family members.
2. Consideration of the need by people not eligible for Home Care, for services available either free or at reduced cost to those who are eligible. For people who are elderly or disabled, but not chronically ill, services such as visiting homemakers, home repairs, etc., can be very expensive, and even those who are able to pay the cost find them difficult to arrange.
3. Devising a system for disseminating information about existing services or new ones as they develop. Services cannot be used to best advantage, nor can the demand be measured, unless both health professionals and potential users know about them.

4. Determining whether the agencies and organizations providing some of the services about which the committee is concerned are able to meet the demand, and whether any of the services are in danger of breaking down because of lack of financial or other resources to fill the demand.
5. Determining whether it is appropriate for the committee to become active in areas such as accommodation, transportation and recreation, or whether it can serve the community better by cooperating with other groups and organizations more directly concerned with those services.

Authorities agree that support services in the community are not cheaper than institutional care. These services do, however, offer an alternative enabling at least some of the elderly to choose the course they feel is more appropriate for them.

There have been a number of indications recently that the province is interested in the development of programs and services which will help people to live in their own homes and which will reduce the rate of institutionalization. Hamilton has come to be recognized as one of the leading communities in this field, and the committee feels that it is important that programs be initiated now, so that they can be ready for full implementation as soon as funds become available.

APPENDIX

V.O.N. SURVEY

Summary of Results

	<u>Living In Own Home</u>	<u>Living in Sub- sidized or Senior Citizen Housing</u>
<u>TOTAL SAMPLE</u>	148	24
No family or friends available	10%	29%
NEEDS:		
- Laundry	36%	37%
- Shopping	43%	62%
- Friendly Visitors	35%	71%
- Yard Maintenance	31%	-
- Heavy Cleaning	52%	50%
- Ambulation	35%	33%
- Personal Care	39%	29%
- Help re Business (e.g., banking)	15%	30%
- Light Housekeeping	29%	28%
- Meal Preparation	25%	25%
- Meals-on-Wheels	16%	13%
- Sitter	28%	12%
- Protective Oversight	11%	21%
- Church Contacts	11%	16%
- House Repairs for Safety (in terms of "Activities for Daily Living" only)	16%	-
- Dressing	14%	9%

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